Social Psychology

Chapter 13

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Chapter 13 Learning Objective Menu

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Social Psychology and Conformity

- Social psychology – the scientific study of how a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior are influenced by the real, imagined, or implied presence of others.
- Social influence - the process through which the real or implied presence of others can directly or indirectly influence the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of an individual.
- Conformity - changing one's own behavior to match that of other people.

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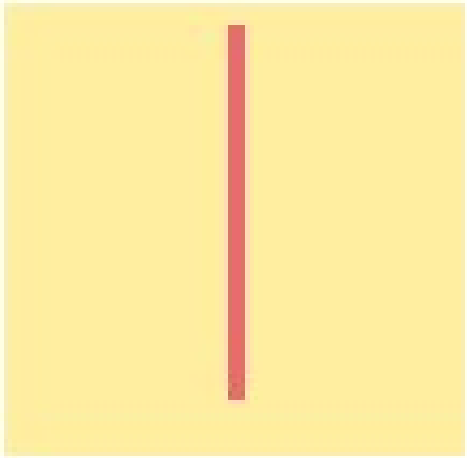
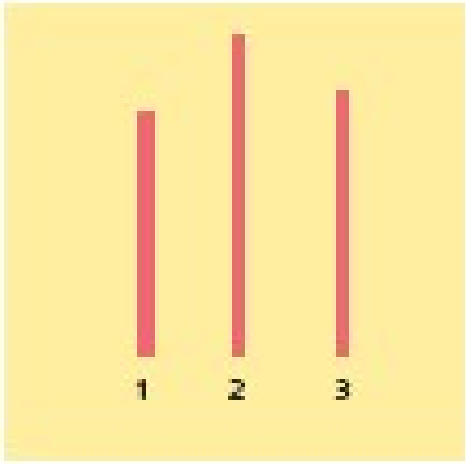
FIGURE 13.1 **Stimuli Used in Asch's Study** Participants in Asch's famous study on conformity were first shown the three comparison lines. They were then shown the standard line and asked to determine to which of the three comparison lines the standard line was most similar. Which line would you pick? What if you were one of several people, and everyone who answered ahead of you chose Line number three? How would that affect your answer?

Source: Adapted from Asch (1956).



Standard Line



Comparison Line

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Groupthink and Compliance

- Groupthink - kind of thinking that occurs when people place more importance on maintaining group cohesiveness than on assessing the facts of the problem with which the group is concerned.
- Consumer psychology – branch of psychology that studies the habits of consumers in the marketplace, including compliance.
- Compliance - changing one's behavior as a result of other people directing or asking for the change.

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LO 13.2 Groupthink

Many historical events have been at least partly caused by the phenomenon of groupthink. The explosion of the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger* on January 28, 1986, which killed all seven astronauts on board, is one of those events. Several people later admitted that they had doubts about the safety of launching on schedule but were afraid to speak up.

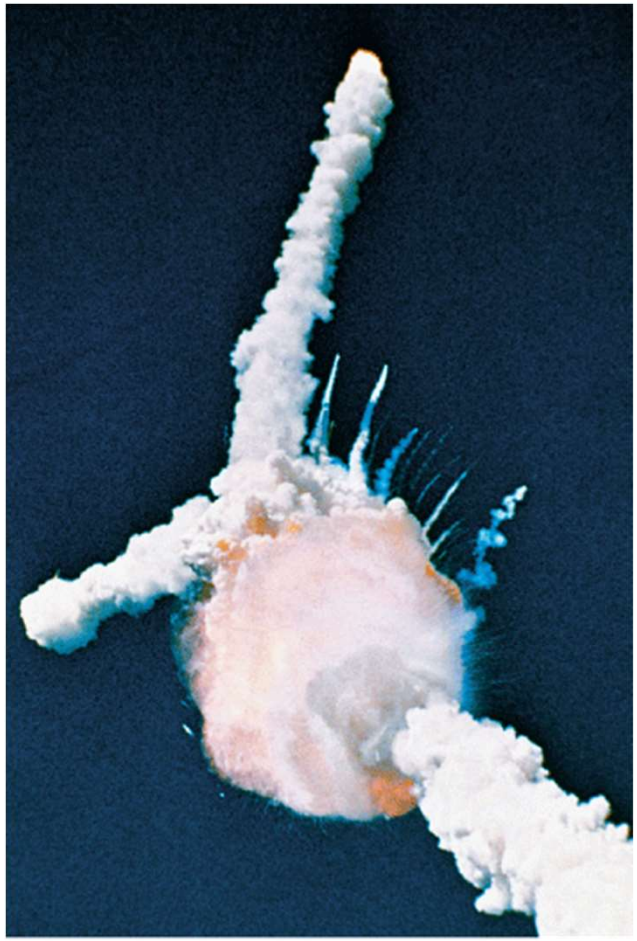

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TABLE 13.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUPTHINK

Characteristic	Description
Invulnerability	Members feel they cannot fail.
Rationalization	Members explain away warning signs and help each other rationalize their decision.
Lack of introspection	Members do not examine the ethical implications of their decision because they believe that they cannot make immoral choices.
Stereotyping	Members stereotype their enemies as weak, stupid, or unreasonable.
Pressure	Members pressure each other not to question the prevailing opinion.
Lack of disagreement	Members do not express opinions that differ from the group consensus.
Self-deception	Members share in the illusion that they all agree with the decision.
Insularity	Members prevent the group from hearing disruptive but potentially useful information from people who are outside the group.

Source: Janis (1972, 1982).

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Four Ways to Gain Compliance

- Foot-in-the-door technique – asking for a small commitment and, after gaining compliance, asking for a bigger commitment.
- Door-in-the-face technique – asking for a large commitment and being refused, and then asking for a smaller commitment.
  - Norm of reciprocity - assumption that if someone does something for a person, that person should do something for the other in return.

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Four Ways to Gain Compliance

- Lowball technique – getting a commitment from a person and then raising the cost of that commitment.
- That's-not-all technique - a sales technique in which the persuader makes an offer and then adds something extra to make the offer look better before the target person can make a decision.

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Obedience

- Obedience - changing one's behavior at the command of an authority figure.
- Milgram study – "teacher" administered what they thought were real shocks to a "learner."

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FIGURE 13.2 **Control Panel in Milgram's Experiment** In Stanley Milgram's classic study on obedience, the participants were presented with a control panel like this one. Each participant ("teacher") was instructed to give electric shocks to another person (the "learner," who only pretended to be shocked). Notice the labels under the switches. At what point do you think you would have refused to continue the experiment?

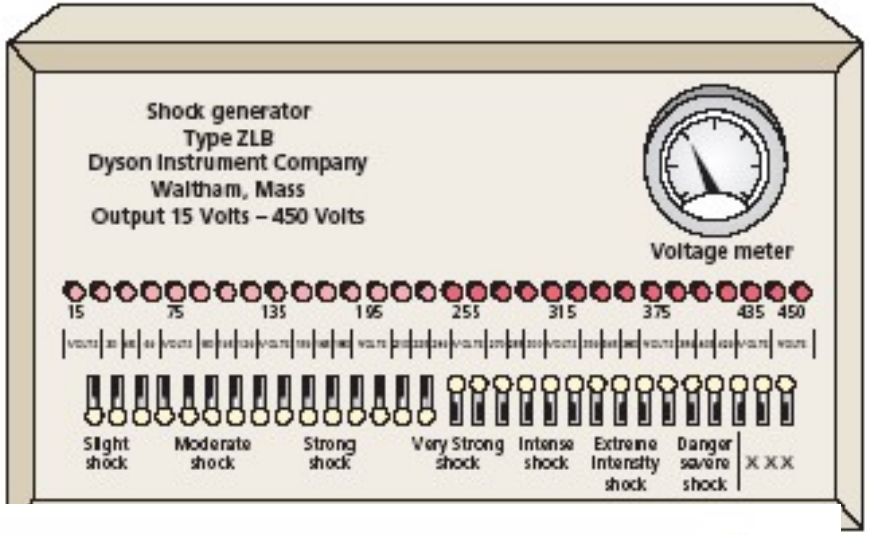

TABLE 13.2 SAMPLE SCRIPT ITEMS FROM MILGRAM'S CLASSIC EXPERIMENT

Voltage of "Shock"	Learner's Script
150	"Ugh!! Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart's starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart's starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out."
210	"Ugh!! Experimenter! Get me out of here. I've had enough. I won't be in this experiment any more."
300	(*Agonized scream*) "I absolutely refuse to answer any more. Get me out of here. You can't hold me here. Get me out. Get me out of here."
330	(*Intense and prolonged agonized scream*) "Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart's bothering me. Let me out, I tell you. (*Hysterically*) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. You have no right to hold me here. Let me out! Let me out! Let me out of here! Let me out! Let me out!"

Source: Milgram (1964a, 1974).

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Social Loafing and Social Facilitation

- Social facilitation - the tendency for the presence of other people to have a positive impact on the performance of an easy task.
- Social loafing - the tendency for people to put less effort into a simple task when working with others on that task.

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Attitudes

- Attitude - a tendency to respond positively or negatively toward a certain person, object, idea, or situation.
- The three components of an attitude are the affective (emotional) component, the behavioral component, and the cognitive component.
- Attitudes are often poor predictors of behavior unless the attitude is very specific or very strong.

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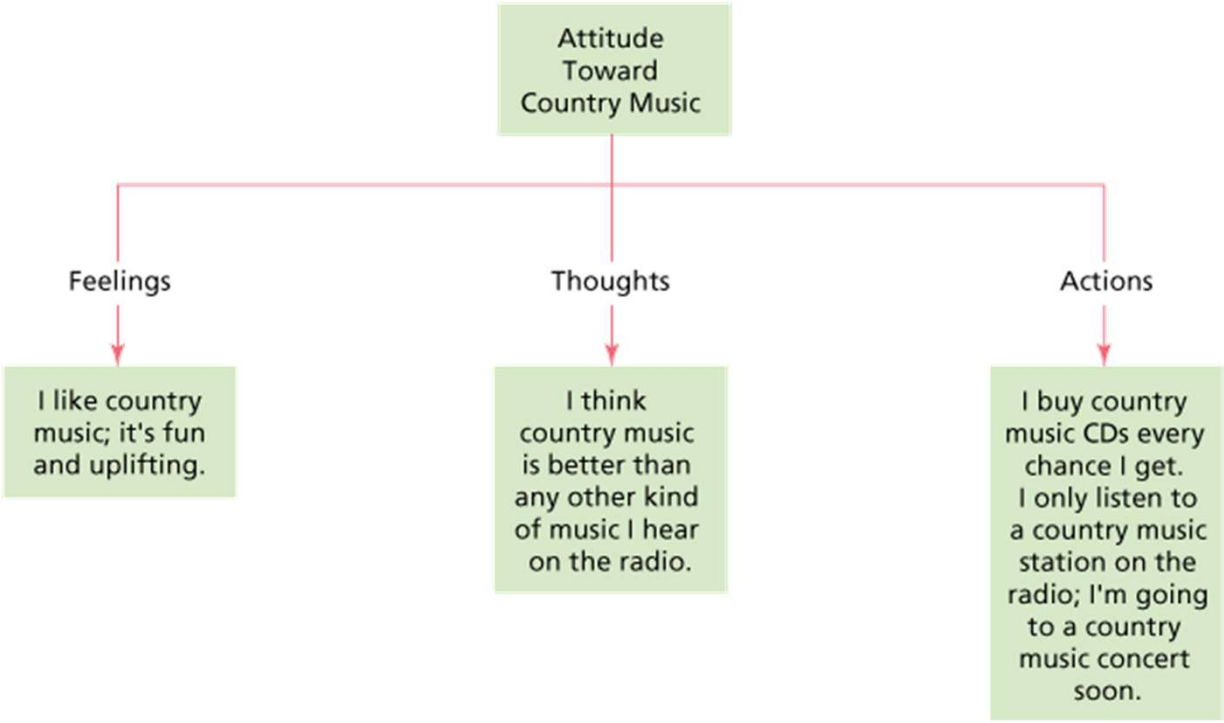
LO 13.6 Components and formation of an attitude

FIGURE 13.3 **Three Components of an Attitude** Attitudes consist of the way a person feels and thinks about something, as well as the way the person chooses to behave. If you like country music you are also likely to think that country music is good music. You are also more likely to listen to this style of music, buy this type of music, and even go to a performance. Each of the three components influences the other two.


Attitude Toward Country Music
Feelings
Thoughts
Actions
I like country music; it's fun and uplifting.
I think country music is better than any other kind of music I hear on the radio.
I buy country music CDs every chance I get. I only listen to a country music station on the radio; I'm going to a country music concert soon.

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Formation of Attitudes

- Direct contact with the person, situation, object, or idea.
- Direct instruction from parents or others.
- Interacting with other people who hold a certain attitude.
- Watching the actions and reactions of others to ideas, people, objects, and situations.

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Persuasion

- Persuasion - the process by which one person tries to change the belief, opinion, position, or course of action of another person through argument, pleading, or explanation.
  - Key elements in persuasion are the source of the message, the message itself, and the target audience.

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Persuasion

- Elaboration likelihood model – model of persuasion stating that people will either elaborate on the persuasive message or fail to elaborate on it, and that the future actions of those who do elaborate are more predictable than those who do not.
  - Central-route processing - type of information processing that involves attending to the content of the message itself.
  - Peripheral-route processing - type of information processing that involves attending to factors not involved in the message, such as the appearance of the source of the message, the length of the message, and other noncontent factors.

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Cognitive Dissonance

- Cognitive dissonance - sense of discomfort or distress that occurs when a person's behavior does not correspond to that person's impression formation the forming of the first knowledge that a person has concerning another person.
  - Lessened by changing the conflicting behavior, changing the conflicting attitude, or forming a new attitude to justify the behavior.

Inducement	Attitude
$1	+1.35
$20	– 0.5
Control	– .45

*Based on a –5 to +5 scale, where –5 means "extremely boring" and +5 means "extremely interesting"

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Social Cognition and Impressions

- Social cognition - the mental processes that people use to make sense of the social world around them.
- Impression formation - forming of the first knowledge a person has about another person.
  - Primacy effect - the very first impression one has about a person tends to persist even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

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Social Cognition and Social Categorization

- Social categorization - the assignment of a person one has just met to a category based on characteristics the new person has in common with other people with whom one has had experience in the past.
  - Stereotype - a set of characteristics that people believe is shared by all members of a particular social category.

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Social Cognition and Social Categorization

- Implicit personality theory - sets of assumptions about how different types of people, personality traits, and actions are related to each other.
- Schemas - mental patterns that represent what a person believes about certain types of people. Schemas can become stereotypes.

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Attributions

- Attribution - the process of explaining one's own behavior and the behavior of others.
- Attribution theory - the theory of how people make attributions.
  - Situational cause- cause of behavior attributed to external factors, such as delays, the action of others, or some other aspect of the situation.
  - Dispositional cause - cause of behavior attributed to internal factors such as personality or character.

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Attributions

- Fundamental attribution error (actor-observer bias) – the tendency to overestimate the influence of internal factors in determining behavior while underestimating situational factors.

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Prejudice and Discrimination

- Prejudice - negative attitude held by a person about the members of a particular social group.
- Discrimination - treating people differently because of prejudice toward the social group to which they belong.
- Forms of prejudice include ageism, sexism, racism, and prejudice toward those who are too fat or too thin.

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Prejudice and Discrimination

- In-groups - social groups with whom a person identifies; "us."
- Out-groups - social groups with whom a person does not identify; "they."
- Realistic conflict theory - conflict between groups increases prejudice and discrimination.
- Scapegoating - tendency to direct prejudice and discrimination at out-group members who have little social power or influence.

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Stopping Prejudice

- Social cognitive theory – views prejudice as an attitude acquired through direct instruction, modeling, and other social influences.
- Social identity theory – theory in which the formation of a person's identity within a particular social group is explained by social categorization, social identity, and social comparison.
  - Social identity - the part of the self-concept including one's view of self as a member of a particular social category.
  - Social comparison – the comparison of oneself to others in ways that raise one's self-esteem.

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Stopping Prejudice

- Stereotype vulnerability - the effect that people's awareness of the stereotypes associated with their social group has on their behavior.
- Self-fulfilling prophecy - the tendency of one's expectations to affect one's behavior in such a way as to make the expectation more likely to occur.

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Stopping Prejudice

- Equal status contact - contact between groups in which the groups have equal status, with neither group having power over the other.
- "Jigsaw classroom" - educational technique in which each individual is given only part of the information needed to solve a problem, causing the separate individuals to be forced to work together to find the solution.

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Attraction

- Interpersonal attraction - liking or having the desire for a relationship with another person.
- Proximity - physical or geographical nearness.
- People like people who are similar to themselves OR who are different from themselves (complementary).
- Reciprocity of liking - tendency of people to like other people who like them in return.

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Love

- Love - a strong affection for another person due to kinship, personal ties, sexual attraction, admiration, or common interests.
- Sternberg states that the three components of love are intimacy, passion, and commitment.
- Romantic love - type of love consisting of intimacy and passion.
- Companionate love - type of love consisting of intimacy and commitment.

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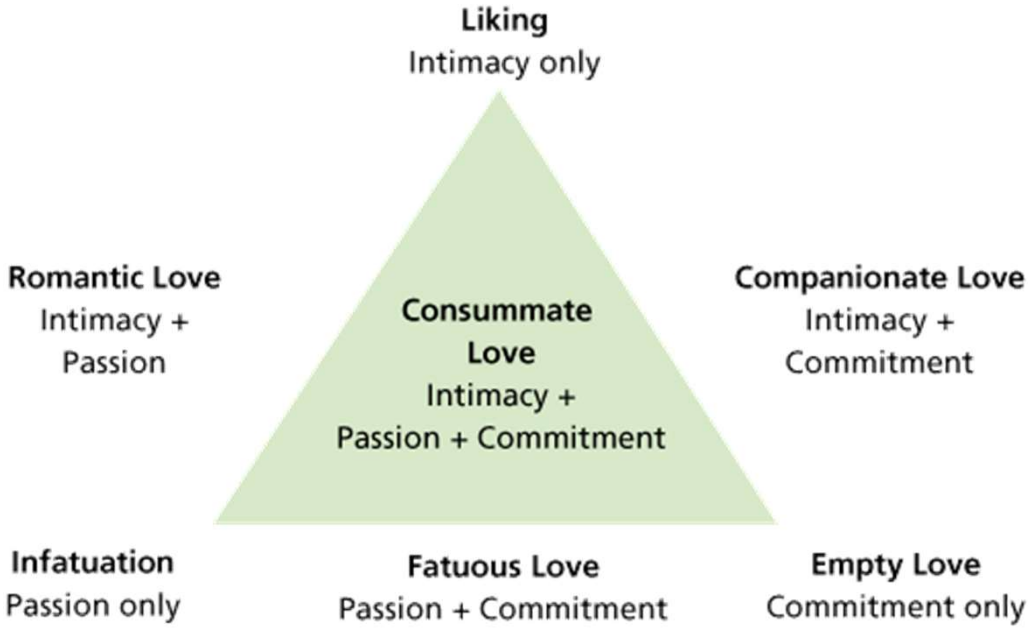
LO 13.14 Love and the different forms of love

FIGURE 13.5 **Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love** This diagram represents the seven different kinds of love that can result from combining the three components of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Notice that some of these types of love sound less desirable or positive than others. What is the one key element missing from the less positive types of love?
Source: Adapted from Sternberg (1986b).



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Aggression

- Aggression - behavior intended to hurt or destroy another person.
- Biological influences on aggression may include genetics, the amygdala and limbic system, and testosterone and serotonin levels.
- Social role - the pattern of behavior that is expected of a person who is in a particular social position.
  - Violent TV, movies, and videos are related to aggression.

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LO 13.15 Biology and learning influences on aggression

This photograph shows a "guard" searching a "prisoner" in Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment. The students in the experiment became so deeply involved in their assigned roles that Zimbardo had to cancel the experiment after only five days—less than half the time originally scheduled for the study.

A U.S. soldier threatens an Iraqi prisoner at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Investigators into alleged abuses at this prison found numerous sadistic and brutal acts committed by U.S. military personnel upon the prisoners. One brigadier general in charge of the prison was suspended. At the time of publication of this text, other legal actions were still being considered.

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Altruism

- Prosocial behavior - socially desirable behavior that benefits others.
- Altruism - prosocial behavior that is done with no expectation of reward and may involve the risk of harm to oneself.

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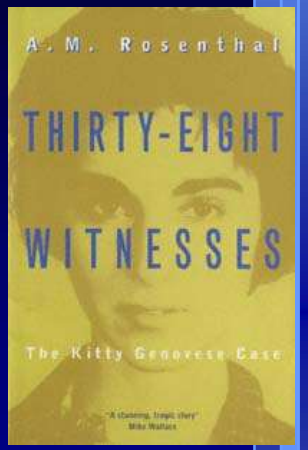
Bystander Effect

- Bystander effect - referring to the effect that the presence of other people has on the decision to help or not help, with help becoming less likely as the number of bystanders increases.
- Diffusion of responsibility - occurring when a person fails to take responsibility for actions or for inaction because of the presence of other people who are seen to share the responsibility.



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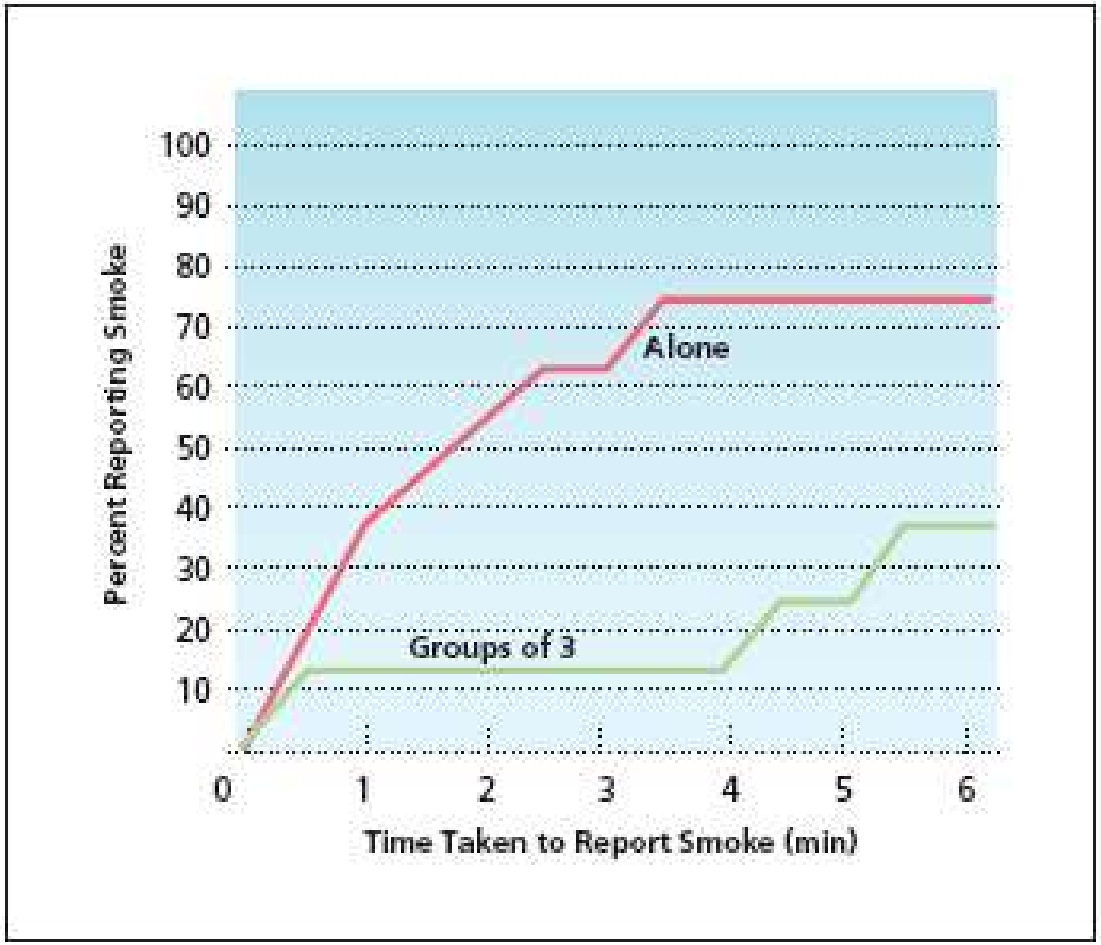
LO 13.17 Bystander effect

FIGURE 13.6 **Elements Involved in Bystander Response** As you can see in the accompanying graph, the time taken to report smoke and the percent of people reporting smoke both depended upon how many people were in the room at the time the smoke was observed. If a person was alone, he or she was far more likely to report the smoke and report it more quickly than when there were three people. (Latané & Darley, 1968).



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Diffusion of Responsibility

- Researchers Latané and Darley found that people who were alone were more likely to help in an emergency than people who were with others.
  - *One bystander cannot diffuse responsibility.*

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Five Steps in Making a Decision to Help

1. Noticing
2. Defining an emergency
3. Taking responsibility
4. Planning a course of action
5. Taking action

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LO 13.19 Decisions before helping occurs.

TABLE 13.3 HELP OR DON'T HELP: FIVE DECISION POINTS

Decision Point	Description	Factors Influencing Decision
Noticing	Realizing that there is a situation that might be an emergency.	Hearing a loud crash or a cry for help.
Defining an Emergency	Interpreting the cues as signaling an emergency.	Loud crash is associated with a car accident, people are obviously hurt.
Taking Responsibility	Personally assuming the responsibility to act.	A single bystander is much more likely to act than when others are present (Latané & Darley, 1969).
Planning a Course of Action	Deciding how to help and what skills might be needed.	People who feel they have the necessary skills to help are more likely to help.
Taking Action	Actually helping.	Costs of helping (e.g., danger to self) must not outweigh the rewards of helping.

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Cults

- People who join cults tend to be under stress, unhappy, unassertive, gullible, dependent, want to belong, and idealistic.
- Young people are likelier to join cults than are older people.
- Cults use love-bombing, isolation, rituals, and activities to keep the new recruits from questions and critical thinking.

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LO 13.20 Why people join cults

In 1978, the Reverend Jim Jones, leader of the People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, ordered his followers to drink poisoned drinks or shoot each other. Of the cult members, 640 adults were dead and 274 children were either killed by their own hands or those of their parents.

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